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### Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jaqua: The Mythological World of The Tainos.*

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short run, but quite pessimistic in the long run. Peace now, but the fire next time.

If there is little or nothing that governments can do, except to adjust to the rhythms of modern European history, what is the role of the activists? First and foremost, they should remember that they are in the minority and, therefore, they count for little in normal times, which satisfy the overwhelming majority of us all too well. They should join the mainstream and enter the political process.

However, if Melko's theory is wrong, "it doesn't make much difference. Nuclear war would come, and most people would be killed, whether or not they had prepared for it" (p. 208). This is a theory that is hard to beat. You cannot lose whether it is right or wrong. If it is right, nuclear war comes later; if it is wrong, nuclear war comes sooner. Sooner or later, the theory predicts, there will be a nuclear war. How can you lose with such a theory? or, rather, how can you win?

Finally, what becomes of peace researchers like the author himself, who has pioneered the emphasis on "peace" in peace research? What can be learned and taught except the rhythms of modern European history? And what would be the use of learning and teaching them, since whether they exist or not makes little difference either way? Nuclear war is predicted whether these past rhythms continue in the future or not. What's to learn or teach, except how to prepare for the apocalypse now or later? And what do peace researchers know about that? They might as well go fishing.

This book is loaded with sociological insights that are presented in a most delightful style. The emphasis on peace and its normality is a welcome emphasis in a field where war usually attracts our attention. The author deserves many thanks for this emphasis in this and other books as well, on which he has been working for almost 25 years: *52 Peaceful Societies* (1973, but the search for these societies began in 1966), *Peace in the Ancient World* (1981, coauthored by Richard D. Weigel), and *Peace in the Western World* (1984, coauthored by John Hord).

William Eckhardt

#### MYTHOLOGIES CIVILIZATION DESTROYS

Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jaqua: The Mythological World of The Tainos*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988.

Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo has presented a fascinating account of the beliefs of the Taino Indians of the Caribbean islands, the first non-European peoples to discover Columbus nearly 500 years ago. They were first enslaved and eventually extinguished by their discoveries. This book concerns itself with those beliefs that prevailed from about 200 AD to 1500 AD.

According to Stevens-Arroyo, Taino mythology reflected their stage of development, which had gone beyond gathering and hunting, but had

not yet achieved intensive agriculture. This "harvesting economy" required some social stratification beyond that required by gatherers and hunters, but not so much as that required by farmers and herders. A harvesting economy is characterized by a staple crop, a settled society, and trade, which results in less freedom and equality than is found among more primitive gatherers and hunters: "With exchange comes the potential for social inequality and the centralization of political power to maintain social unity" (p. 46). The accumulation of wealth soon led to economic inequality, and finally all of these characteristics of a harvesting economy resulted in more social tensions and more conflicts, both internally and externally (p. 48).

Not least among these tensions was that between the old way of the gathering and hunting life and the new way of the harvesting life. The old way was generally characterized by more freedom and equality, while the new way meant less freedom and equality. And the new way expressed itself most concretely in the form of a permanent chief: "Taino mythology emphasized the power of a chief" (p. 255). According to the author, this new way of life and its chief required a belief system to legitimize them, to justify the new ways to those used to the old ways: "The Taino religious belief system . . . necessarily functioned to legitimate a tribal-tributary structure" (p. 51). Its "symbols will be considered as tools for legitimizing unequal exchange values" (p. 17). "At its roots, mythology is theology" (p. 88), that is, mythology like theology tells us what is good and bad, right and wrong, under certain conditions.

For example, in a Taino creation myth, there was a son who wanted to kill his father (who was a "high god" or "Supreme Being"), but the father killed him instead for daring to challenge the established order of things: "Since the myth describes the primacy of patriarchal rights against those of rebellious sons, Yaya ["high god"] serves the function of representing paternal and cacical [chiefly] authority" (p. 92). In short, the myth instructs those who would challenge the chief that death may be the consequence: "This description of negative effects of proscribed behavior is a mythic device to explain a taboo and establish norms of ethical behavior" (p. 94).

The myths reflected many other social and emotional relations, including the tension between old ways and new ways of living, between the shaman of old and the chief of the new, the feminine and the masculine, the familiar and the foreign. For example, the Cave of the Jagua (fruit tree whose juice was used to make body paint) was the mythological origin of the Taino peoples, while the Cave Without Importance was the mythological origin of the rest of humanity, who were of no importance compared to the Taino. The Taino, like the rest of us, apparently felt superior to everybody else.

Hero myths, whether masculine or feminine, depicted those brave ones who helped humanity to move forward from gathering and hunting to a harvesting economy, which required sacrificing some freedom and equality to the chief, which required moving from doing what comes naturally to learning what is culturally approved. Mother Earth turns out

to be an unreliable guide to the new way of living, which requires a Sky Father to lead His children out of the cave of nature into the light of culture: "Hence, the theme is the acquisition of culture" (p. 176). However, this theme remains somewhat ambiguous at this stage of development, and has to wait for the coming of intensive agriculture before the ambiguity is made somewhat clearer, but has to wait for civilization before there is no ambiguity left at all.

Many other mythological themes are explicated by the author in this book, including the use of psychological archetypes and the collective unconscious of Jung, where "the feminine dominates the masculine in achieving the mature Taino personality" (p. 216). The author uses psychoanalysis, like structuralism, "to show that the myth provides a bridge from society to the mind" (p. 219). This personality and society, dominated by the feminine, and just emerging from the gathering and hunting stage of human development, were hardly a match for the civilized Spanish conquistadors, dominated by the masculine with little or no ambiguity, so that "Hispaniola [where the Tainos lived] had become a slaughterhouse not only for the Taino people, but also for their religion" (p. 83).

This book contains a wealth of material for those interested in mythology and its relation to other human activities, such as making a living and going to war.

*William Eckhardt*